

## Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, SP

SUBJECT: MIXED REACTIONS TO SPANISH TRADE UNION MEETING IN PARIS

REF: EC BRUSSELS 1751

1. SUMMARY: THERE ARE DIFFERING OPINIONS IN BRUSSELS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE MARCH 8-9 MEETING OF SPANISH TRADE UNIONISTS IN PARIS. ICFTU OFFICIALS HAVE DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS A "MODEST BEGINNING AT BEST" AND ON THE WHOLE DISAPPOINTING, WHILE WCL LEADERS ARE BILLING IT AS A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT AND AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A UNIFIED DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT IN SPAIN. THERE WERE 15 SPANISH TRADE UNION LEADERS IN ATTENDANCE (NINE FROM INSIDE SPAIN) REPRESENTING THE UGT, USO, CNT, BASFPTV

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AND SOC OF CATALONIA. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO ICFTU OFFICIALS, THE JOINT ICFTU-WCLRA SPONSORED MEETING OF SPANISH TRADE UNIONISTS IN PARIS ON MARCH 8-9 WAS OF ONLY MARGINAL VALUE IN TERMS OF PROSPECTS FOR UNIFYING DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION FORCES IN SPAIN. THEY ATTRIBUTE THIS TO THE FACT THAT THE MEETING WAS HELD OUTSIDE OF SPAIN AND BECAUSE IT INCLUDED LEADERS WHO DID NOT REPRESENT NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IN SOME CASES WERE NOT BONAFIDE TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES. ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY VANDERVECKEN, WHO WAS THE PRINCIPAL ICFTU OFFICIAL AT THE MEETING, TOLD THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE THAT THE SIX REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SPANISH UGT IN ATTENDANCE (FIVE OF THEM FROM INSIDE SPAIN) WERE RELUCTANT PARTICIPANTS. HE SAID THAT THE UGT WAS OPPOSED TO HOLDING THE MEETING OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY BECAUSE IT THEN BECAME JUST ANOTHER MEETING OF EXILES, THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF WHICH HAS BEEN AMPLY PROVEN THROUGH THE YEARS.

3. VANDERVECKEN ALSO SAID THAT THE UGT LEADERS FELT THAT THE MEETING WAS BEING USED BY THE WCL TO GIVE STATUS TO ITS AFFILIATES IN SPAIN WHICH ARE SMALL AND PURELY REGIONAL AND HAVE NO NATIONAL STANDING. HE SAID THAT THE ONE USO DELEGATE IN ATTENDANCE SHARED THIS UGT VIEW. THE WCL'S AFFILIATE IN CATALONIA, THE SOC, WHICH SENT THREE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PARIS MEETING, WAS APPARENTLY THE TARGET OF THESE UGT-USO CRITICISMS.

4. A BIGGER BONE OF CONTENTION, HOWEVER, WAS THE PRESENCE OF FOUR CNT ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST REPRESENTATIVES. VANDERVECKEN DESCRIBED THE CNT AS AN EXILE ORGANIZATION WITH LITTLE OR NO STANDING IN SPAIN AND SAID THAT THE UGT DELEGATES WERE OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE WCL'S DECISION TO INVITE THE CNT.

5. WCL LEADERS, WHO WERE THE PRINCIPAL PROPONENTS OF HOLDING THE MEETING, WERE PLEASED WITH ITS RESULTS, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MECHANISM HAD BEEN CREATED TO ARRANGE FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS. WHEN WCL GENERAL SECRETARY JEAN BRUCK, WHO CHAIRED THE MARCH 9 SESSION, RECOMMENDED THE CREATION OF A COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THAT PURPOSE AND THE ISSUANCE OF A PRESS STATEMENT ANNOUNCING THE FORMULATION OF A COMMON FRONT, HE WAS VOTED DOWN.

6. NEVERTHELESS, THE UGT DID AGREE TO COOPERATE WITH

THE OTHER DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS INSIDE SPAIN, WHICH GAVE SOME PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING, PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM THE WCL, HOPE THAT A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP COULD EVENTUALLY BE ESTABLISHED. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT THE ICFTU AND WCL "WOULD REMAIN AT THE DISPOSAL" OF THE DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS IN SPAIN TO RENDER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND TO COORDINATE WITH THE SPANISH UNIONS IN AIDING IMPRISONED TRADE

ACTIVISTS AND IN PUBLICIZING THEIR PLIGHT INTERNATIONALLY.

PUM VANDERVECKEPTOLD US THAT ONE OF THE FEW POSITIVE ASPECTS MJEETING WAS THE FACT THAT UGT AND USO REPRESENTATMES WERE MEETING TOGETHER. HE SAID THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS COULD EVENTUALLY MERGE ALTHOUGH THE USO CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN HE UGT IS TOO CLOSELTIED TO TE SOCIALIST P ECH, ACCORDING TO VANDERVECKEN, IS A SERIOUS BARRIER TO UNITY. GREENWALD

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